



ANCIENT and MODERN SECRETS for LIFELONG RADIANCE



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Preface

from Debra

The year was 1973. I'd recently become a teacher of Transcendental Meditation, and my work in the organization was to introduce meditation into corporations and educational institutions throughout the Chicago area. I quickly realized, however, that as a young woman barely out of my teens, if I wanted to be as effective as possible, I should probably have a college degree.

So off I went to Washington University in St. Louis, where I immediately founded the first meditation club on campus. One of the members was a beautiful, dynamic woman named Ronnie Newman. I was struck by her brilliance and her desire to more thoroughly understand the science behind why meditation had such a profound effect on minimizing stress and accelerating a student's ability to learn and retain knowledge.

We became fast friends and moved in and out of each other's lives for decades. I continued to teach meditation, success, and healthy lifestyle courses around the world, and Ronnie went on to study at Harvard. In fact, she became a research assistant and then a full collaborator and Project Director on the largest study in Harvard's Psychology Department at that time.

I was not surprised to discover that the research published by her team was largely focused on the profound effect of meditation. This became the basis for the article featured in *Newsweek* in March 1990 titled *Looking for the Fountain of Youth: Scientists Unlock the Secrets of Aging*. More than 350 newspapers and magazines worldwide picked up the research.

The value of that study was that it shattered the existing paradigm of inevitable cognitive and mental decline with aging, and laid the groundwork for the new field of mind/body medicine. The most exciting discovery was that human beings have the capacity to slow or even reverse the declines commonly associated with the aging process and enhance their quality of life well into their seventies, eighties, nineties, and beyond with the right lifestyle choices.

Fast-forward to October 2019 when Ronnie and I decided to spend a month at the Sri Sri Ayurvedic Health Center in India, where we both enjoyed thirty luxurious days of profound ancient Ayurvedic treatments to rejuvenate our minds and our bodies.

During our month together at the Ayurvedic Center, this ebook was born. In it, we give you a taste of our more than ninety years of combined study, teaching, and research on how to slow and even reverse the aging process.

We hope you enjoy these five chapters, and we invite you to join us on one of our upcoming LIVE webinars where we go more deeply into:

Secrets to Slowing and Reversing the Aging of Your Brain and Body

Reserve your spot here: <https://yestosuccess.com/webinar/>

We look forward to meeting you!

Staying Hydrated *for* Youthful Skin *and* Radiant Health

One of our personal favorite anti-aging secrets is staying hydrated. It's so simple to do—and it works! Don't take our word for it, though—just ask yourself if you'd rather have skin like a juicy grape or a raisin.

Throughout the day, even if you're just sitting and working at your desk, doing no exercise or movement at all, your body is still constantly losing water, so you need to be replenishing your water supply. And the way you replenish it is by drinking water.

Often people think that if they're drinking coffee or tea (or even soda),

that counts as water, but those drinks metabolize differently, and because they are typically high in caffeine, which acts as a diuretic, these beverages actually **dehydrate** you. Worse yet, sodas, fruit juices, and other sweetened beverages (Vitamin Water, for instance) are filled with sugar, and they can destroy your health by causing inflammation in the brain and the body if not consumed in **extreme** moderation.

Manufacturers sneak sugar into our drinks in the most insidious ways. For example, people have been duped into thinking Vitamin Water is healthy for them, but one bottle of this so-called "healthy" water has 32 grams of crystalline fructose, which is 98 percent pure sugar. That's almost the identical amount of sugar as in the same size bottle of Coca-Cola.


Added sweeteners, such as NutraSweet, Equal, or Splenda, have been linked to a full range of diseases—most notably reproductive disorders, learning disabilities, osteoporosis, diabetes, autoimmune disorders, weight gain, and every kind of cancer you can possibly name. In fact, a 2008 study in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reported that consuming aspartame (found in NutraSweet and Equal) could "cause neurological and behavioral disturbances including migraine headaches, insomnia and seizures."

So the key to optimum hydration is drinking *pure, unadulterated water*. It's the cheapest and easiest way we have to stay healthy. No gym membership required!

Six Benefits of Adequate Hydration

1. It reduces fatigue and increases your energy levels.



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- 2. It keeps the blood moving more freely through the veins and arteries.** This helps to prevent high blood pressure and other cardiovascular diseases.
 - 3. It reduces the symptoms of allergies and asthma.** When the body is dehydrated, it creates more histamines, leading to congestion and trouble breathing.
 - 4. It reduces skin disorders and premature aging of the skin.** Without proper hydration, your skin can't properly rid itself of toxins, and so it becomes irritated and congested. This can lead to acne in young people and a plethora of skin disorders as well as premature wrinkles in adults.
 - 5. It prevents weight gain.** When our cells are depleted of water, they can't create the energy we need to function, so they send a signal to the brain to eat more.
 - 6. It slows the aging process.** All of our organs require large amounts of water to function properly. When we're dehydrated, every cell, organ, and system in the body has to work harder, which means more rapid aging.

Hydration affects our brains too. The human brain is composed of 95 percent water, and even a 2 percent drop in the body's water content can actually cause a small but critical shrinkage of the brain. This can impair your coordination, your concentration, your endurance, your memory, your clarity, and your energy level!

Hopefully you're convinced that you need to stay hydrated, but just *how much* water do you need? Most likely you've heard since you were a kid that you need to drink eight glasses of water a day. However, this might be too much for some and not enough for others. In addition, your water requirements vary from day to day depending on various factors such as your activity level and even the weather conditions.

The good news is that your body has a mechanism that tells you when you need to replenish your water supply. This mechanism is called *thirst*—and it's built right in to each of us!

The bad news is that when you begin to feel thirsty, you're most likely already dehydrated. This is particularly true for people over the age of sixty because our thirst mechanism tends to become less efficient with age.

So although thirst is still the best indicator to inspire us to hydrate, it's a good idea to learn some of the other, more subtle signals your body sends to indicate you need to drink more water, which include:

- Fatigue
- Hunger, even though you've recently eaten
- Dull, dry skin and/or pronounced wrinkles
- Dark yellow, concentrated urine
- Constipation
- Infrequent urination (healthy people urinate about seven or eight times each day)

And if you want some approximate guidelines, it's a pretty safe bet that if you drink half your body weight in ounces of water each day, you'll stay hydrated. This means that if you weigh 120 pounds, 60 ounces a day should do the trick. This makes more sense than eight glasses for everyone.

So drink up! Have a big glass of water first thing in the morning. We like to add the juice of half a lemon for the additional detoxification benefits. (Lemon doesn't interfere with the body's ability to hydrate, as coffee or tea does.) Keep a bottle of water on your desk, one in your car, and one by your bed, and you'll be on your way to enjoying youthful, radiant health. Your skin will thank you too!



The Anti-Aging (and Aging!) Effect of Exercise

Now let's talk about what kind of exercise can slow down the aging process—and what exercise modalities can speed it up!

Compelling research has concluded that there are two exercise methods that can prevent cellular aging more effectively than other methods, and you might be surprised to hear what they are. And no, neither one is yoga!

One is high-intensity interval training, or “HIIT,” and the other is endurance training.

For those of you who are not familiar with HIIT, it's a cardiovascular exercise modality that combines short bursts of intense exercise with

periods of rest or lower-intensity exercise. A great example of a HIIT workout is sprinting at near-maximum speed for thirty seconds, followed by walking for thirty seconds.

Japanese researcher Izumi Tabata popularized the “twenty seconds work to ten seconds rest” interval. And it's his research that started the whole HIIT movement as a viable alternative to the typical steady state cardio approach (also called endurance or aerobic training) such as biking, jogging, rowing, speed skating, and swimming.

Numerous studies support the idea that HIIT is more effective at burning fat than endurance training. For example, one study measured the effects on young women of fifteen weeks of HIIT versus endurance training. Only the women in the HIIT group experienced improvements in their weight, body composition, and fasting insulin levels.

However, in terms of its effect on *aging*, endurance training—activities that increase your breathing and heart rate—appears to be equal to HIIT.

In fact, a recent study published in the *European Heart Journal* examined the effects of different types of exercise on 125 participants over a six-month period. The participants

were instructed to perform either HIIT, endurance training, or resistance training (which uses free weights, machines, resistance bands, or one's own bodyweight to increase muscular strength). At the end of the six months, researchers found that HIIT and endurance training, but *not* resistance training, increased telomere activity. What is telomere activity? Telomeres are nucleotide sequences found at the end of our chromosomes. When they shorten, aging occurs. HIIT and endurance training were both found to increase telomere length, thus producing an antiaging effect!



And now the caveat: *overexercising* can lead to excessive aging in various ways.

For example, after prolonged exercise—such as a twenty-mile run or speed walk (even if those twenty miles are spread over a week’s time!), the body changes its metabolism and starts producing free radicals, which are atoms that can cause permanent damage to your cells and also speed up the aging process.

Free radicals are also created by external factors such as cigarette smoke, air pollution and certain foods such as processed meats, fried foods and alcohol. Free radicals attack nearby healthy cells, including your collagen and DNA. Collagen damage makes your skin look older.

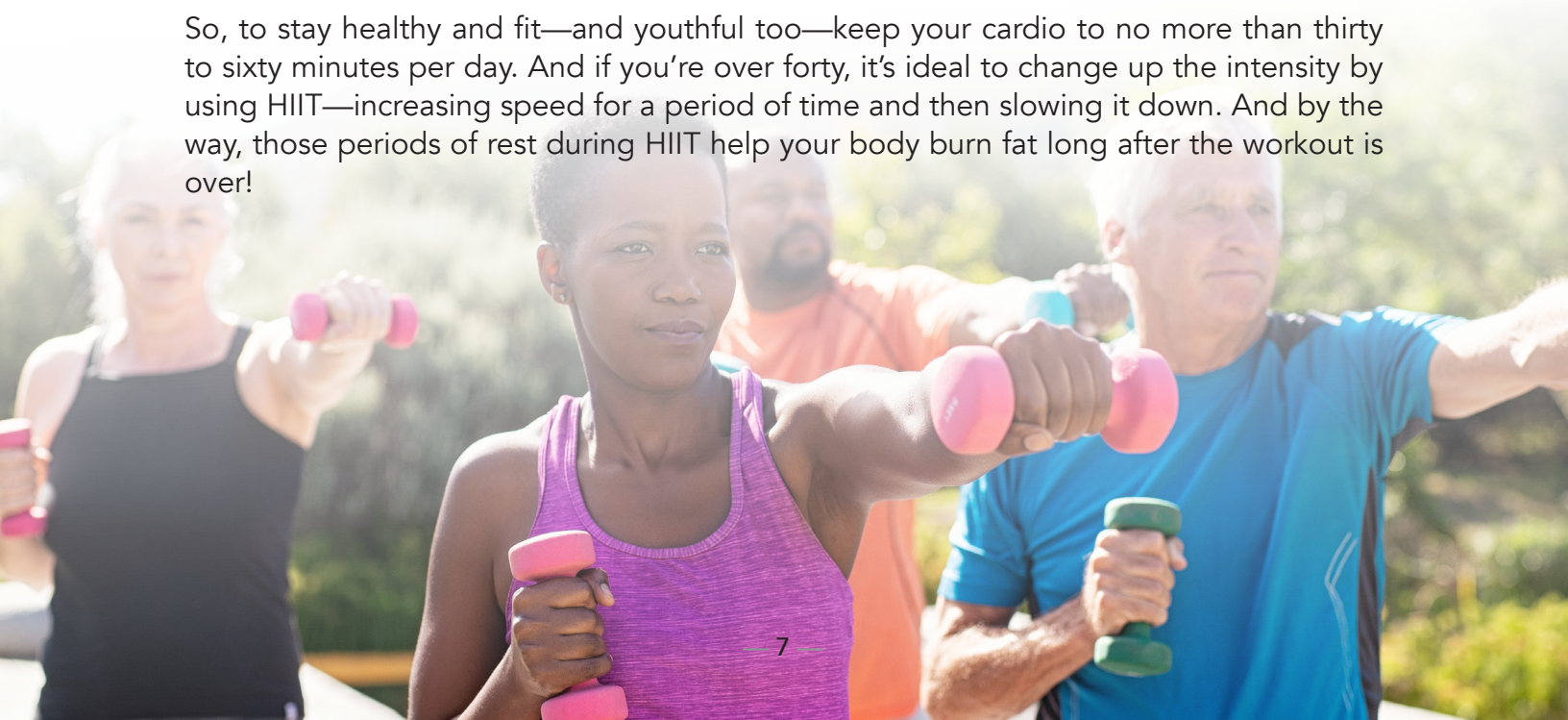
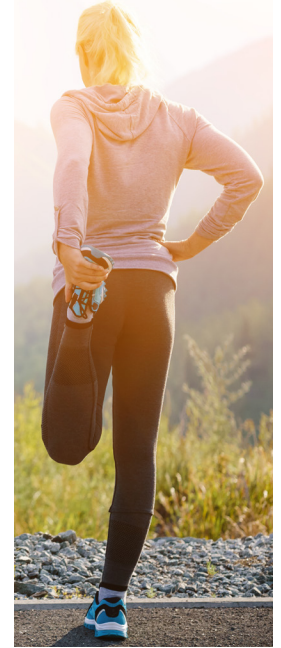
However, you’d need to run or speed walk at least twenty to twenty-five miles a week to cross the fine line between this activity making you look younger (improved muscle tone and circulation) and making you look older.

Additionally, although weight-bearing exercise is known to increase bone density, excessive aerobic training has been linked to a decrease in bone density in women

A number of plastic surgeons believe that running is the greatest cause of premature wrinkles after smoking and sunbathing. “Running is not good for the facial tissues,” says plastic surgeon Laurence Kirwan. “All that pounding up and down causes shearing forces of the skin against bone and loosens everything, so you get the slack neck and jowls you see in people like rock star Madonna, who is an avid runner. I see a lot of New Yorkers who run five to six days a week, and I tell them to use bikes instead so they won’t end up with saggy breasts and a slack face.”

It’s proven that regular aerobic activity can decrease your risk of heart disease by 50 percent, but too much can even be deadly. An American study found that heart attacks and strokes triggered by overexercising have tripled since 1980.

So, to stay healthy and fit—and youthful too—keep your cardio to no more than thirty to sixty minutes per day. And if you’re over forty, it’s ideal to change up the intensity by using HIIT—increasing speed for a period of time and then slowing it down. And by the way, those periods of rest during HIIT help your body burn fat long after the workout is over!



Can *the* Basis of Bad Breath Be *a* Contributor *to* Alzheimer's?

Oral health is more important to longevity than you might realize. While most of us recognize its importance for a dazzling smile and avoiding the pain and cost of dental problems, according to the Mayo Clinic and other respected sources, our oral health is a window to our overall health. In fact, a former US Surgeon General recently said, "The human body cannot be healthy without FIRST having a healthy mouth."

Additionally, in the United State's federal report, Healthy People 2020, oral health was identified as one of the

ten leading health indicators. Other indicators included access to healthcare and good nutrition.

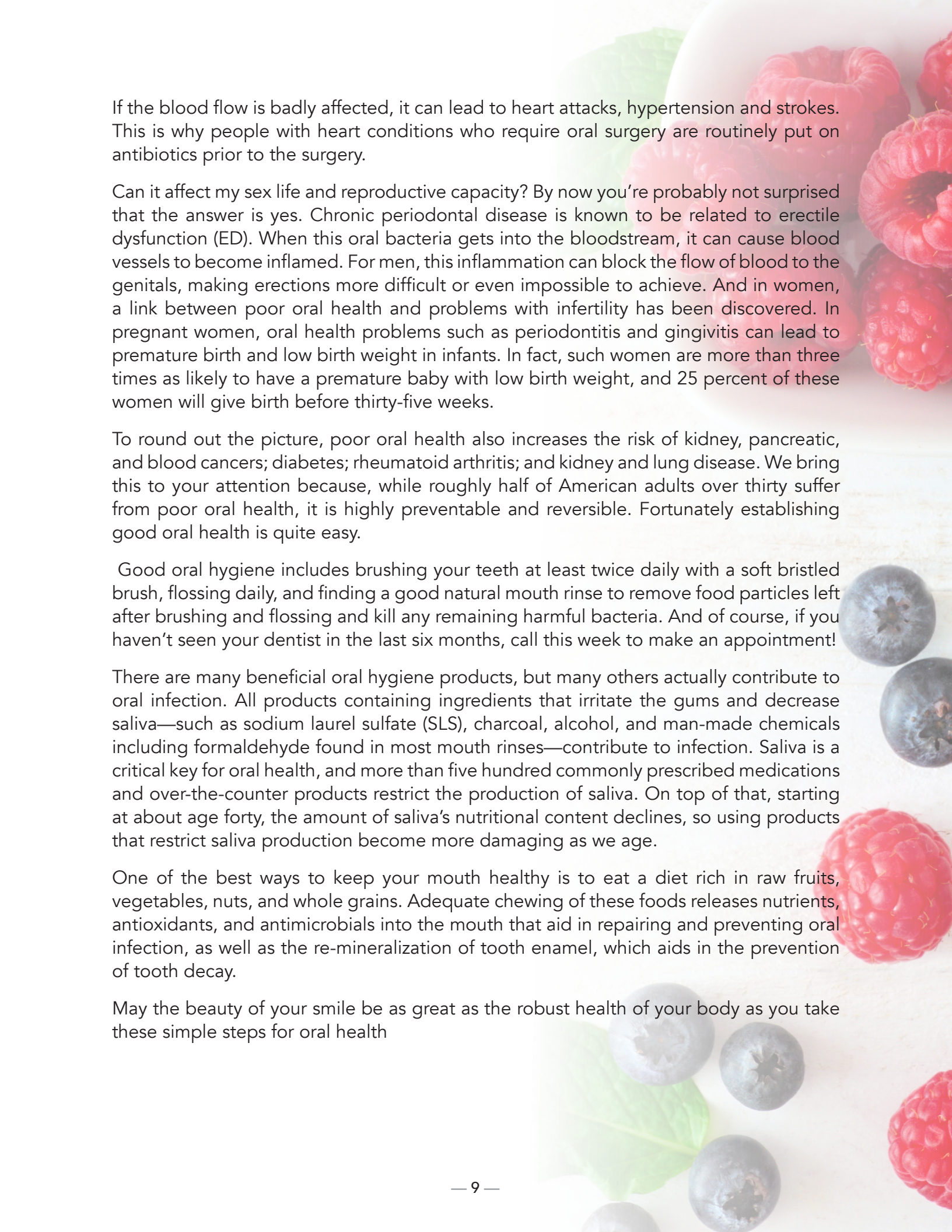
So, why is the state of our mouths so important for creating optimal, lifelong health?

Our mouths are teeming with bacteria, both beneficial and harmful. Because the mouth is a primary entryway into the body, when there is poor oral health with its accompanying harmful bacteria, that bacteria can easily get into the bloodstream and cause inflammation and infection wherever it spreads. Fortunately, this can easily be prevented. First, let's take a quick look at what recent research has revealed about the life-determining role of oral hygiene and its newly discovered impact on our brains, hearts, kidneys, lungs, and sexual function.

Can the source of bad breath also cause Alzheimer's disease? As odd as it sounds, the answer may be yes. Chronic bad breath accompanied by an unpleasant taste in your mouth is frequently the result of harmful bacteria overgrowth. Recent research has discovered that harmful oral bacteria that leads to bad breath, gum inflammation, and other periodontal problems can enter the brain by means of the bloodstream and nerve pathways, thus crossing the blood brain barrier.

A landmark study in 2019 by Dr. Keiko Watanebe and colleagues showed that oral bacteria found within the brain can initiate neuro-inflammation, neuro-degeneration, and the formation of amyloid or senile plaques that are found in Alzheimer's patients. Her team also discovered that this bacteria decreases the availability of glucose to the brain. This is significant since glucose is the brain's primary source for the energy it needs to perform all of its functions.

Can this insidious bacteria cause heart attacks, hypertension, and strokes? The answer is a definitive yes, since once this bacteria gets into the bloodstream, it produces protein, resulting in blood platelets sticking together. These "sticky" platelets cause clots, which reduce normal blood flow, and the heart does not get the nutrients and oxygen it needs.



If the blood flow is badly affected, it can lead to heart attacks, hypertension and strokes. This is why people with heart conditions who require oral surgery are routinely put on antibiotics prior to the surgery.

Can it affect my sex life and reproductive capacity? By now you're probably not surprised that the answer is yes. Chronic periodontal disease is known to be related to erectile dysfunction (ED). When this oral bacteria gets into the bloodstream, it can cause blood vessels to become inflamed. For men, this inflammation can block the flow of blood to the genitals, making erections more difficult or even impossible to achieve. And in women, a link between poor oral health and problems with infertility has been discovered. In pregnant women, oral health problems such as periodontitis and gingivitis can lead to premature birth and low birth weight in infants. In fact, such women are more than three times as likely to have a premature baby with low birth weight, and 25 percent of these women will give birth before thirty-five weeks.

To round out the picture, poor oral health also increases the risk of kidney, pancreatic, and blood cancers; diabetes; rheumatoid arthritis; and kidney and lung disease. We bring this to your attention because, while roughly half of American adults over thirty suffer from poor oral health, it is highly preventable and reversible. Fortunately establishing good oral health is quite easy.

Good oral hygiene includes brushing your teeth at least twice daily with a soft bristled brush, flossing daily, and finding a good natural mouth rinse to remove food particles left after brushing and flossing and kill any remaining harmful bacteria. And of course, if you haven't seen your dentist in the last six months, call this week to make an appointment!

There are many beneficial oral hygiene products, but many others actually contribute to oral infection. All products containing ingredients that irritate the gums and decrease saliva—such as sodium laurel sulfate (SLS), charcoal, alcohol, and man-made chemicals including formaldehyde found in most mouth rinses—contribute to infection. Saliva is a critical key for oral health, and more than five hundred commonly prescribed medications and over-the-counter products restrict the production of saliva. On top of that, starting at about age forty, the amount of saliva's nutritional content declines, so using products that restrict saliva production become more damaging as we age.

One of the best ways to keep your mouth healthy is to eat a diet rich in raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains. Adequate chewing of these foods releases nutrients, antioxidants, and antimicrobials into the mouth that aid in repairing and preventing oral infection, as well as the re-mineralization of tooth enamel, which aids in the prevention of tooth decay.

May the beauty of your smile be as great as the robust health of your body as you take these simple steps for oral health

Breathe Your Way *to a* Younger You

During periods of stress, someone may have told you to “take a deep breath.” Turns out it’s good advice. It may be hard to believe that such a simple act could help de-stress us, and in the process become a potent anti-aging tool. Yet it’s true.

And here’s why: according to numerous researchers, such as those at Harvard and the University of California San Francisco Medical Schools, stress can make our bodies age faster. Fortunately, using techniques that build “stress resilience,” a medical term for being able to prevent or quiet the body’s stress response, you can slow down the rate of aging and promote longevity.

You see, when we feel stressed about anything, the body’s fight-or-flight response kicks in. As a result, stress chemicals are released into the body, and those stress chemicals create biological changes. For example, these chemicals affect a critically important part of every cell of our body: telomeres. Telomeres are caps at the end of our DNA strands that shorten every time the cell reproduces, and this shortening causes aging. The discovery that chronic stress speeds up the shortening of telomeres was part of a medical discovery so important that it led to the Nobel Prize.

Stress chemicals also down regulate, or slow down, the production of antioxidants that protect us from many diseases as we age.

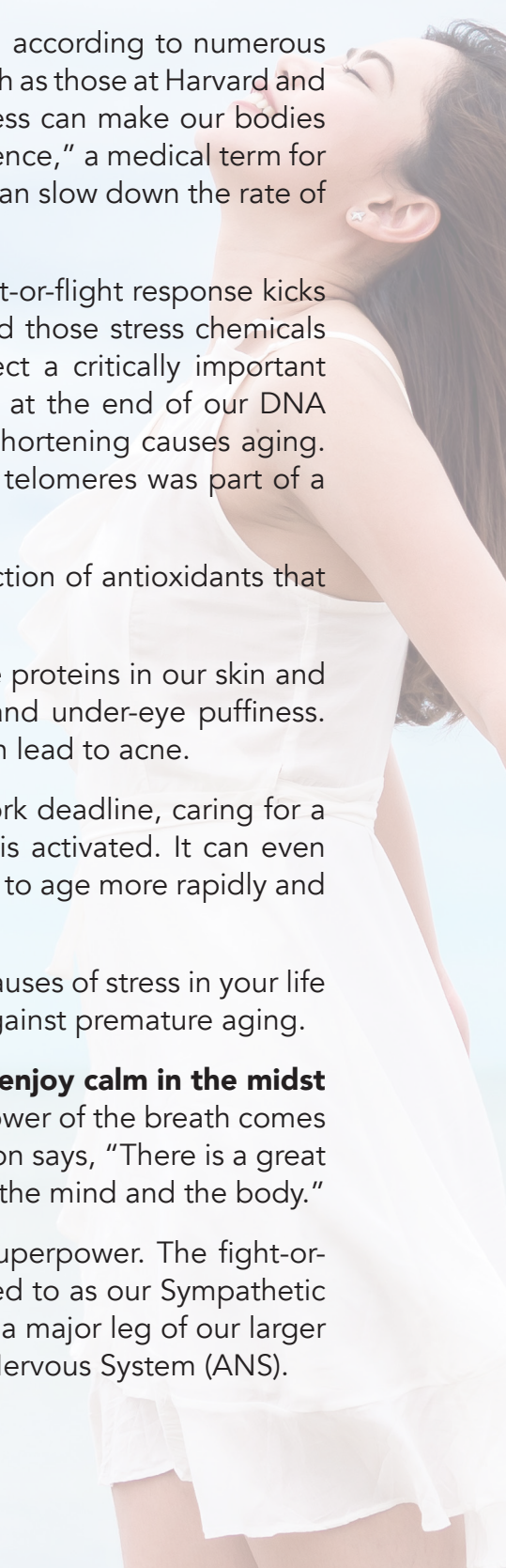
Stress also leaves a mark on our faces. It causes changes to the proteins in our skin and reduces its elasticity, which contributes to wrinkle formation and under-eye puffiness. Specific stress hormones also increase oil production, which can lead to acne.

When we feel stressed about *anything*, whether it’s a major work deadline, caring for a sick family member, or feeling isolated, this physical reaction is activated. It can even permanently break down our system, causing areas of the brain to age more rapidly and atrophy (shrink).

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, but minimizing avoidable causes of stress in your life and learning techniques to manage stress can you help fight against premature aging.

So how can we beat this “knee-jerk” reaction to stress and enjoy calm in the midst of the storm? As surprising as it may seem, this is where the power of the breath comes in. As Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, founder of the Art of Living Foundation says, “There is a great secret in the breath. The breath is the connecting link between the mind and the body.”

Let’s review the biology of how the breath can become our superpower. The fight-or-flight stress response is triggered by an internal network referred to as our Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)—just remember S for Stress. The SNS is a major leg of our larger autonomic/involuntary nervous system, called the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS).



The SNS is connected to and runs *all* of the automatic functions of the body—digestion, perspiration, heartbeat, hormone production, etc. The other leg of our ANS is the opposite of the SNS. It is the peaceful, restful Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS)—remember P for Peaceful.

These two legs, or branches, of the Autonomic Nervous System rise and fall in opposition to each other, like two ends of a seesaw. They are completely involuntary, thus out of our control. (And this is a good thing. We wouldn't want to stay up all night instructing our heart to keep beating!)

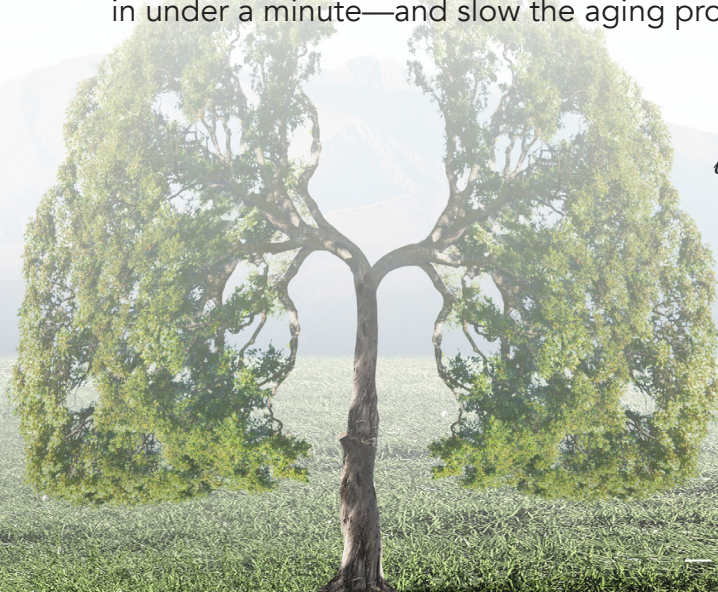
However, there is one function, and one function alone, of the ANS that, in addition to being automatic, can also be consciously controlled by us.

Can you guess which one? If you answered the breath, you're right! And because we can control the breath—for example, breathing at different rates or holding our breath for short periods of time—we have a unique and powerful window into our ANS. It means that we're not at the mercy of stress and overpowering emotions that can keep the SNS activated. Instead, through specific patterns of breathing, we have the capacity to quiet the Sympathetic Nervous System's functioning and increase the peaceful, pleasant Parasympathetic Nervous System—thus rebalancing the ANS, even in the midst of a storm.

Here's the best part: harnessing the power of our breath is easy to learn, and breath practices can be used anywhere, at any time. We've used them to calm our nerves before speaking to groups of thousands, before undergoing surgeries, and in Ronnie's experience, after being hit by an eighteen-wheel oil tanker going seventy miles an hour down the highway!

And when my (Ronnie's) ninety-one-year-old mother had dangerously high blood pressure (199/100) and nothing the hospital ER did could bring it down, I taught her a specific breath practice—which is the same practice taught to gang members in the inner city to calm their stress—and in two minutes her blood pressure came down thirty points.

So the next time you're feeling stressed or upset, all you need to do is take a handful of deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth filling up your abdomen and you will find that this simple way of breathing will release anxiety and clear your brain in under a minute—and slow the aging process!



*To meditate with mindful breathing
is to bring body and mind back to the
present moment so that you do not
miss your appointment with life.*

– Thich Nhat Hanh

The Anti-Aging Effect of Happiness

One of the best anti-aging medicines for your brain, your body, and your bliss is absolutely delightful to swallow—it's your level of happiness!

- Happy people live an average of seven years longer than their unhappy counterparts and enjoy a better quality of life.

- Happy people's brains work better, their immune systems are stronger, they look younger, and they earn more money.

If you've always thought of yourself as a "glass half-empty" kind of person, the good news is that it's possible to train your brain to be happier and reap its anti-aging benefits on a daily basis. You can use the innate power of your mind to be ageless.

You see, our thoughts, emotions, and mindset powerfully influence the condition of our bodies. Cutting-edge medical science (the field of psychoneuroimmunology, or PNI) has discovered that our thoughts and emotions are critical factors in making or breaking our physical health.

Studies reveal that our emotions are not just in our heads—they're transmitted almost instantaneously everywhere in our bodies by chemical messengers called neuropeptides. These chemical messengers are released with our every emotion and are rapidly picked up by our cells, directly affecting how our immune, endocrine, and nervous systems function.

"Negative" emotions such as fear, anger, and sadness adversely affect us, resulting in lowered resistance to disease, poor overall health, and cognitive decline. In contrast, "positive" emotions such as joy, happiness, and enthusiasm produce chemical messengers that affect us in positive ways, resulting in improved resistance to disease, enhanced brain function, and better overall health.

The research proves it: feeling happy and optimistic leads to significant alterations in our physiology that contribute to us becoming more at every age. We all want to live a happier life, so why not do what it takes to become more vital, energetic, and long-lived in the process?

Fortunately, doing what it takes is within our power. Neuroscientists have discovered that we can train our brains to be resiliently joyful regardless of outer circumstances. Scientists used to think that once a person reached adulthood, their brain was fairly well set in stone and there wasn't much they could do to change it. But new research is revealing exciting information about the brain's neural plasticity (its ability to be changed): when you think, feel, and act in different ways, the brain changes and actually rewires itself.

We're not doomed to the same negative neural pathways and thus the same behaviors for our whole life.



Leading brain researcher Dr. Richard Davidson at the University of Wisconsin Center for Investigating Healthy Minds says, “Based on what we know of the plasticity of the brain, we can think of . . . happiness and compassion as skills that are no different from learning to play a musical instrument or tennis.”

When we change our thinking to support our happiness, the negative neural pathways shrink and the positive neural pathways widen. This widening makes it *easier and more automatic* to think positively and be happy now and in the future. *We can* train our brains to be happy!

True happiness turns out to be a neurophysiological state of peace and well-being that isn’t dependent on external circumstances; rather, that inner state of happiness shapes our experience of the world.

The world is as we are.

Here are three practical tips for positively changing those neural pathways:

- 1. Pay attention to what you say to yourself and to others.** I (Ronnie) recently developed tendonitis in both of my elbows and currently cannot lift weights, which I love. I could have criticized myself and said, “I was so stupid to overexercise and create this problem, and now I need physical therapy. I guess I’m just getting older.” But thankfully, because I’ve trained myself to have a positive mindset, I could say instead, “My elbows are creating temporary limitations, yet the rest of me feels great, and I still love doing my Jazzercise with abundant energy.” Can you sense the difference in each statement?
- 2. Count your blessings.** Review the last twenty-four hours and make a list of events and experiences you are grateful for. Go ahead and “accentuate the positive”—it’s more than mere mood-making. Yesterday might not have been a particularly good day, but when you look for things you can be grateful for, you are likely to find positive occurrences that were overshadowed by the daily struggle. A friend’s email, a refund check, a thank-you received, being able to see a beautiful sunset as you drove home from the store all add up when you put your attention on them.

Doing this daily is ideal. Make a list of at least five to ten things you are grateful for and keep it in a journal. You can include daily events, positive feelings about your children, your values, your faith, or an experience while walking in the park. Once every few weeks, pull out your journal and review all of the positives you have in your life.

3. Meditate. Meditation can put us on the fast track to happiness by increasing activity in those parts of the brain that are responsible for positive emotions. If you've never tried it, I encourage you to consider adding it to your life. Look for a qualified instructor or just start small by sitting quietly and watching your breath or your thoughts for five to ten minutes each day and get ready for the positive results you'll reap.

Isn't it gratifying to know that we can dramatically influence our longevity and vitality by tending to our mindset and cultivating happiness? And it's an inside job, not dependent on outside influences. We have so much more power than we realize to create the life of our dreams. As Samuel Johnson so eloquently stated:

*The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance;
the wise man grows it under his feet.*



We hope you enjoyed this ebook and will be incorporating some of these practices in your daily life!

These suggestions are just a taste of what we have to offer. We are committed to supporting you in not only creating lifelong vibrant health but slowing down and even reversing the aging process of your brain and your body.

Please join us for one of our LIVE webinars coming up in late May and into June where we go more deeply into other areas where simple lifestyle changes can make the difference between aging like most people we see around us and creating a strong body, clear mind, and happy heart for the rest of your long and healthy life.

Please click on the link below to reserve your spot and we look forward to meeting you.

<https://yestosuccess.com/webinar/>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



DEBRA PONEMAN has been teaching meditation and her Yes to Success™ courses around the world for over 45 years. Tens of thousands have benefitted from her knowledge and techniques on how to live an optimally successful, healthy, and happy outer life on a foundation of profound inner silence.

“Debra Poneman’s words have changed my life forever. What she shares is both powerfully informative and profoundly inspirational.”

*~John Gray #1 NY Times bestselling author,
Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*



RONNIE NEWMAN is an award winning Harvard-trained mind/body researcher with decades of experience lecturing and teaching around the world. Ronnie has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals on the power of meditation, the breath and other modalities to decrease stress and increase happiness, clarity, and longevity and slow down and even reverse mental and physical decline.